

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF:
WESTON HOUSE
WESTON UNDERWOOD
MILTON KEYNES**

NGR: (SP 8672 5078)

on behalf of Dr Nicholas Griffin



Martin Cuthbert BA (Hons) PIFA

July 2009

ASC: 1181/WWH/1



Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	WWH	<i>ASC Project No:</i>	1181
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-60549	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	1241/AYBCM:2009.212
<i>County:</i>	Milton Keynes (Unitary Authority)		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Weston Underwood		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Weston Underwood		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 8672 5078		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c. 4300 sq m,		
<i>Present use:</i>	Garage and outbuildings		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Conversion and extension of existing workshop.		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	08/01312/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Milton Keynes Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	June 2009		
<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Mr Roger Carlisle 64 Wolverton Road Newport Pagnell Milton Keynes Bucks MK16 8JG		
<i>Client:</i>	Dr N Griffin Weston House Weston Underwood Olney Bucks MK46 5LA		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Roger Carlisle		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	Martin Cuthbert	<i>Date:</i>	6 th July 2009
------------------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------------------

<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
-------------------	--	--------------	--

<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	6 th July 2009
---------------------------	-------------	--------------	---------------------------

© Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

No part of this document is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

Every effort is made to provide detailed and accurate information. However, Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd cannot be held responsible for errors or inaccuracies within this report.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced with the sanction of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
ASC Licence No. AL 100015154

CONTENTS

Summary.....	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Aims & Methods	9
3. Archaeological & Historical Background.....	10
4. Results.	11
5. Conclusions	18
6. Acknowledgements	19
7. Archive	19
8. References	20

Appendices:

1. ASC Watching Brief Monitoring Sheets	21
2. Photo List.....	25
3. ASC OASIS Form	26

Figures:

1. General location	3
2. Site plan	7
3. Area of the proposed development.....	8
4. Engraving of the northern face of Weston House <i>c.</i> 1820.....	10
5. Excavated areas	13
6. Archaeological remains	14
7. Southwest facing section of trench A	15
8. Northeast facing section of trench A	15
9. Southwest facing section of trench B	15

Plates:

Cover: Weston House, looking south

1. Trench A general shot, looking southeast.....	16
2. Trench B general shot, looking southeast.....	16
3. Wall in trench A, looking southwest	16
4. Mortar layer in trench A, looking southwest	16
5. Possible wall [001] in trench B, looking east	16
6. Possible ditch [001] overlying possible wall in trench B, looking, northeast	16
7. Possible ditch [001] in trench B, looking northeast.....	17
8. Overall ground reduction in progress, looking southwest	17
9. Soakaway section, looking southeast	17
10. Trench C, looking southeast	17
11. Catch pit, looking southeast.....	17
12. Trench C, looking north.....	17

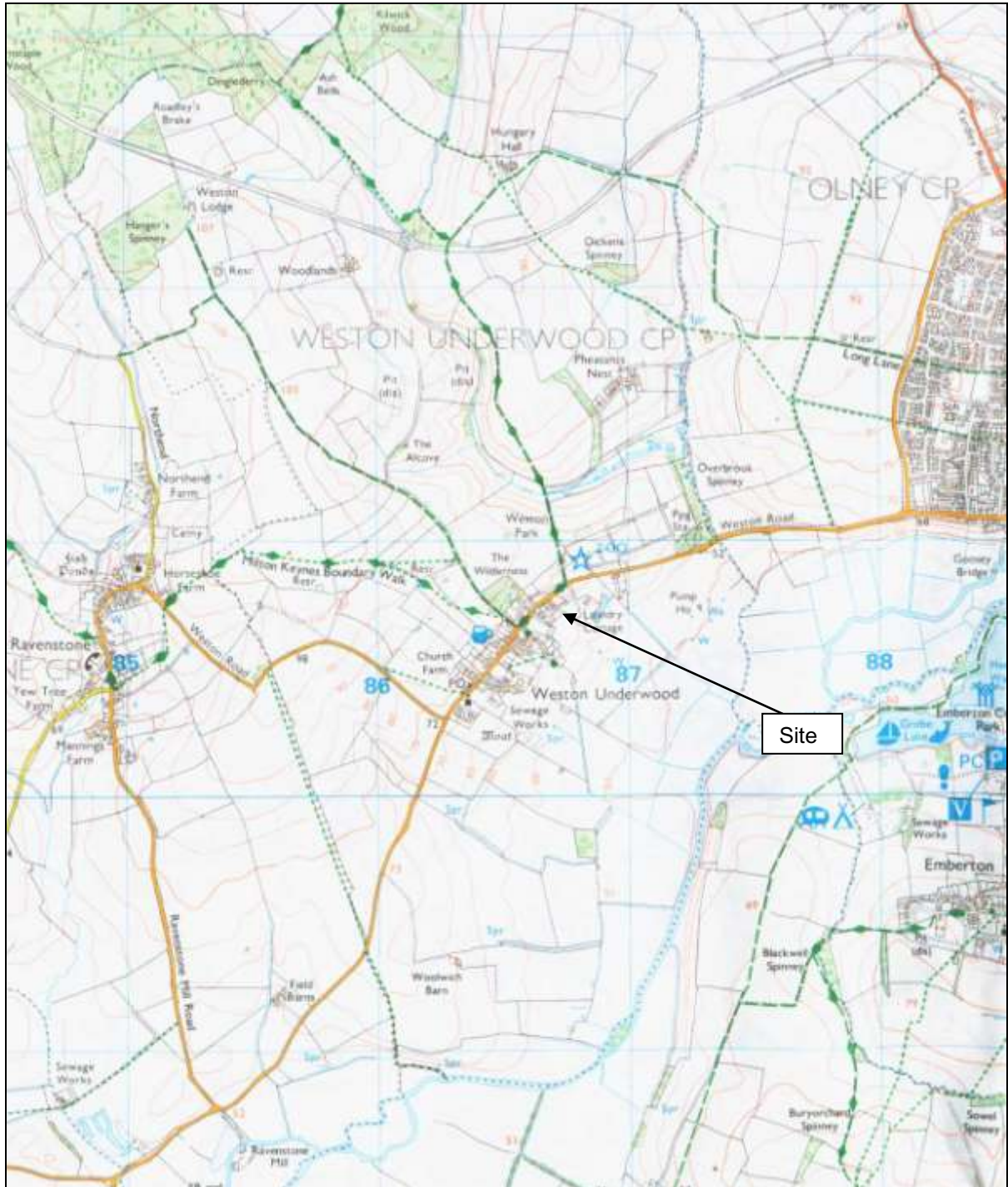


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In June 2009 a watching brief was carried out at Weston House, Weston Underwood, Milton Keynes, during the excavation of footing trenches and associated services, in relation to the conversion and extension of the existing garage and workshop. One wall, a possible wall, a layer of mortar and a possible ditch were revealed in the footing trenches.

1. Introduction

1.1 In June 2009 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out a watching brief at Weston House, Weston Underwood, Milton Keynes. The project was commissioned by the architect Roger Carlisle on behalf of his client Dr Nicholas Griffin, and was carried out according to a standard brief, defined in discussions with Milton Keynes Council's Archaeological Officer (MKCAO). The relevant planning application reference is 08/01312/FUL.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This watching brief was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Archaeological Organisation* by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *Management*

The project was managed by Karin Semmelmann BA MA MIFA and was carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is situated in Weston Underwood in the administrative district of Milton Keynes in the historic county of Buckinghamshire. It is situated to the east of the village core and is centred on National Grid Reference SP 8672 5078 (Fig. 1).

The site comprises an irregular plot of c. 4300 sq m, which includes the front and rear gardens, driveway and Weston House itself. The site is accessed from the High Street to the north (Fig. 2).

The early 18th century west wing of Weston House stands on the site, along with a later 20th century extension which is the building to be converted as part of the development (Fig. 3).

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area are of the *Hanslope Association*, which are characterised as *slowly permeable calcareous clayey soils*. *Some slowly permeable non-calcareous clayey soils*. *Slight risk of water erosion*. The underlying geology is described as *chalky till* (Soil Survey, 1983, 411d).

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposal is for the conversion and extension of the existing garage and workshop. (Fig. 3).

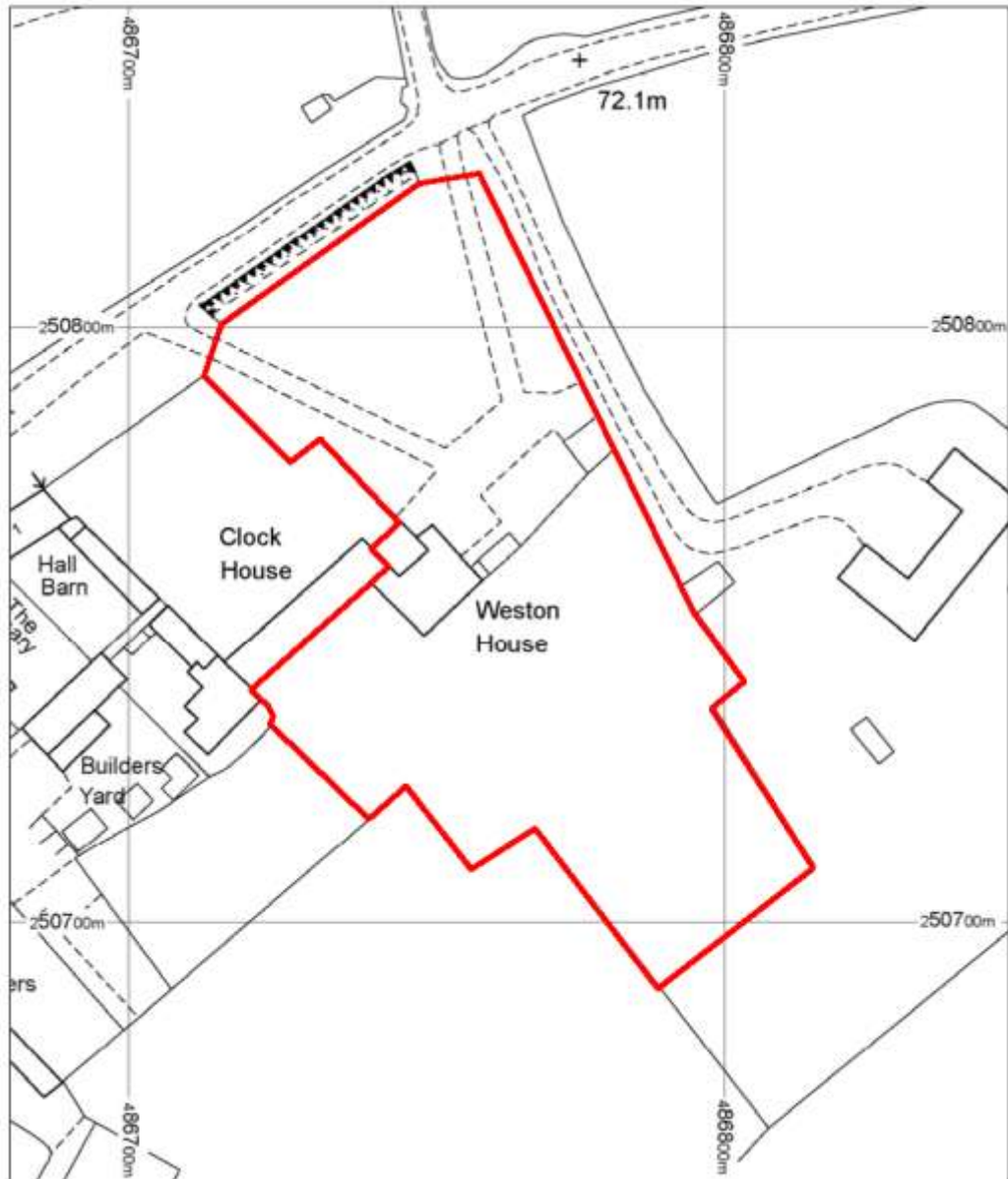


Figure 2: Site plan (scale 1:1250)

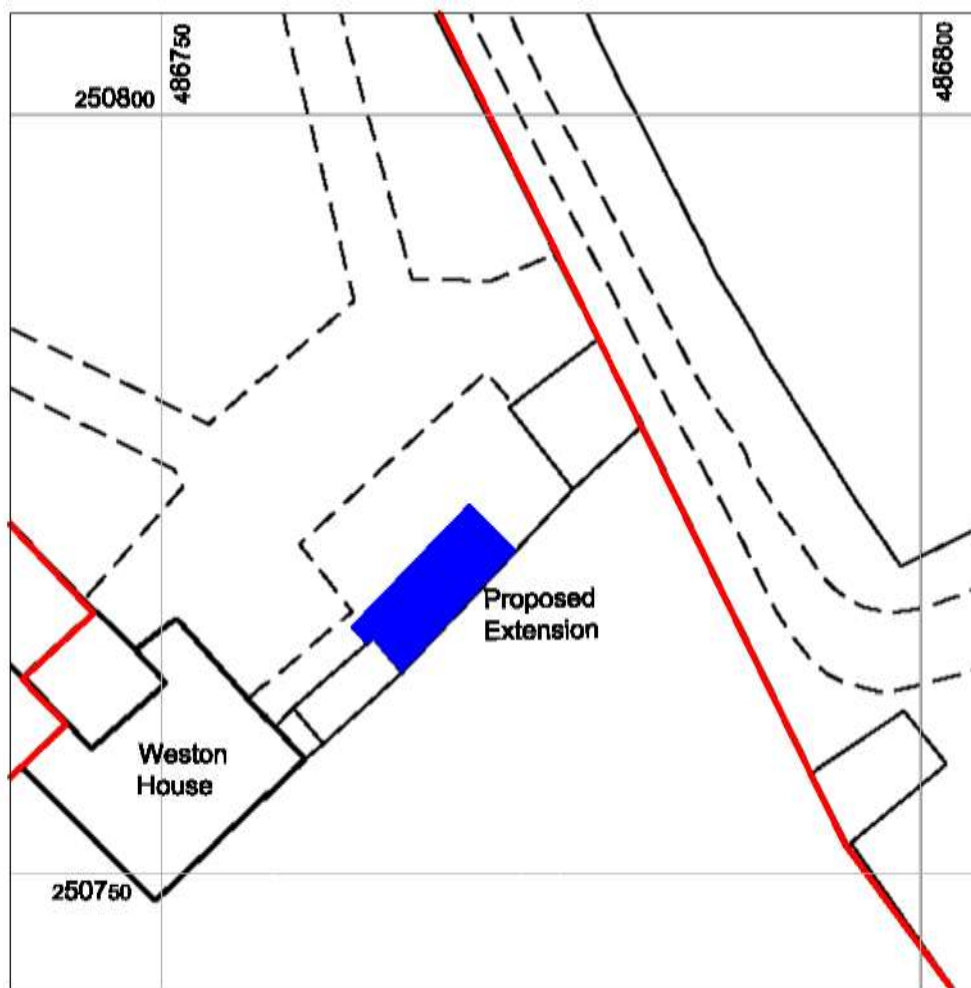


Figure 3: Area of the proposed development (scale 1: 500)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

Following discussions with the Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer (MKAO) the aims of the project were:

- To record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the construction of the proposed new extension

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 *Methods*

Following discussions with the Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer (MKAO) the methods for this project were:

- A continuous watching brief on all groundworks associated with the construction of the new extension
- Appropriate provision for dealing with any significant archaeology revealed during the watching brief
- Preparation of a report and project archive

2.4 *Constraints*

No constraints were identified prior to the watching brief fieldwork and none were encountered during the monitoring visits.

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from readily available sources.

3.2 The village of Weston Underwood is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and probably has its origins in the Saxon period. The place-name contains the Old English elements *west* + *tun* meaning the west farmstead or village, the suffix of Underwood most likely referring to its position in relation to Yardley Chase (Mawer & Stenton 1925, 16).

3.3 Much of the village belonged to the Throckmorton family from as early as 1436. The family lived in Weston House for four centuries and were well known recusants in the late 18th century (Pevsner 1960, 727).

3.4 The village is best known for its association with the 18th century poet William Cowper who made the village his home living in 'Cowper's House' between 1786 – 1795. The village boasts a number of fine Georgian and other 18th century houses on the High Street in addition to two examples of 17th century architecture (*ibid*).

3.5 Weston House itself was built in the 1570's, most likely for Sir Robert Throckmorton who married the widow of the late Lord Hungerford. Wings to the east and west were added in 1710. It was eventually pulled down in 1828. The early 18th century west wing (Fig. 4) is all that survives today. This was added to in 1828, along with one bay of the Roman Catholic chapel which was built in 1838 (*ibid*).

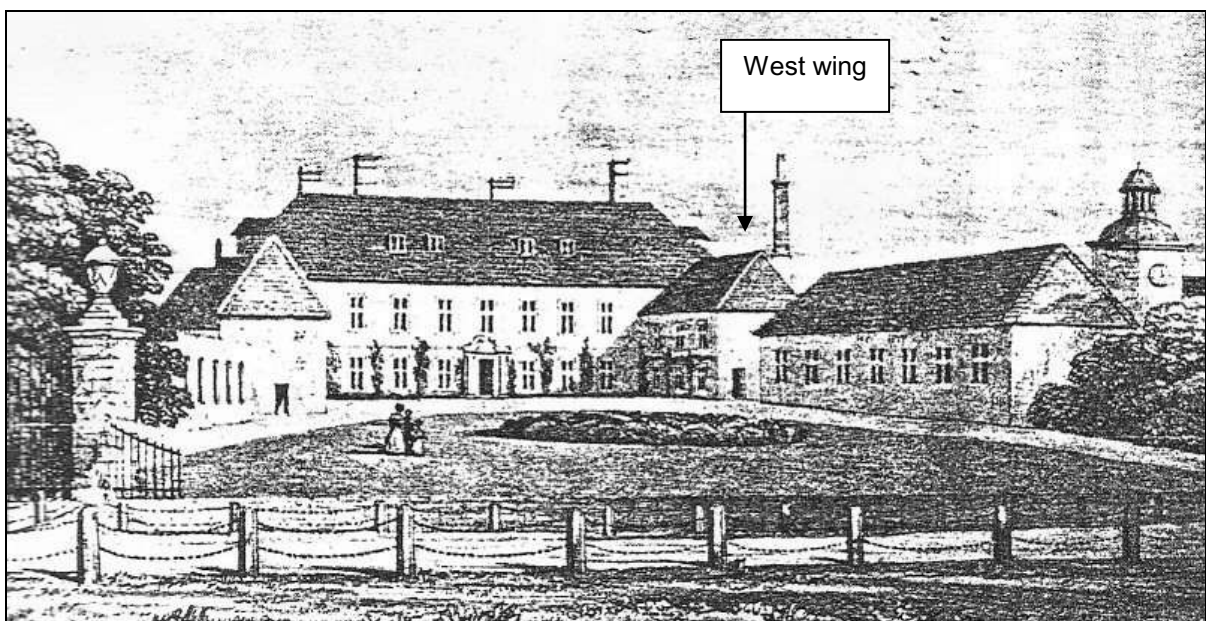


Figure 4: Engraving of the northern face of Weston House c.1820.

4. Results

4.1 The watching brief consisted of four half day visits to monitor ground reduction across the footprint of the new building, as well as excavation of two footing trenches, a service trench, and associated soakaway and leaf catchment pit. All were excavated by a mini digger prior to the construction of a new extension (Fig. 5). No archaeological finds or pottery, other than a few limestone building fragments and 19th and 20th century material, were observed in the spoil from the trenches, soakaway and catch pit, which were all visually scanned.

4.2 *Footing Trench A and B and ground reduction*

4.2.1 *Trench A* (Figs 5, 6, 7 & 8, Plates 1, 3 & 4)

Trench A was 4.2m long, 0.6 wide and *c.*1.3m deep. It was cut through *c.*0.7m of made ground consisting of orange-mid brown silty sandy clay with frequent mortar inclusions and 19th & 20th century pottery and brick fragments, *c.*0.3 m of buried subsoil consisting of mid-light brown silty clay with occasional charcoal inclusions, then into the natural strata consisting of beige yellow clay.

A wall and a layer of mortar were revealed in section and in plan in trench A.

Wall (Figs 6, 7 & 8, Plates 1 & 3)

The wall was 1.2m in width and was revealed at a depth of 0.7m. It was aligned northeast-southwest across the trench. Three courses of faced limestone were all that remained, bonded with a beige lime and clay mixed mortar.

Mortar layer (Figs 6 & 8, Plate 4)

The layer of mortar was *c.*0.25m thick and revealed at a depth of 0.6m. It was only seen in the northeast facing section and was very irregular in shape, in section and in plan. It was revealed *c.*0.2m northwest of the wall and continued into the north-western trench edge. No finds were recovered from this layer.

4.2.2 *Trench B* (Figs 5, 6 & 9, Plate 2, 5, 6 & 7)

Trench B was 2.6m long, 0.7m wide and *c.* 1.0m deep. The trench cut through *c.*0.6m of made ground, consisting of orange-mid brown silty sandy clay with occasional mortar inclusions and 19 & 20th century brick and tile fragments. It then cut into the natural strata consisting of beige yellow clay.

A possible wall and ditch/ robber trench were revealed in trench B

Possible wall (Figs 6 & 9, Plates 5 & 6)

The possible wall ran into the southeast end of the trench, therefore its full dimensions are unclear. It was constructed of unworked and unbonded limestone.

Possible ditch/robber trench [001] (Figs 6 & 9, Plates 6 & 7)

The possible ditch was *c.*1.1m wide and *c.*0.6m deep. It was aligned northeast-southwest across the trench and was revealed in both sections. The cut [001] was quite irregular in shape in both sections. It was filled with orange and grey stony clay with occasional limestone fragments (002), which was very similar to the made ground around it. This overlay fill (003), a dark brown silty deposit similar to the buried subsoil within trench A. No finds were recovered from either fill.

4.2.3 **Ground reduction** (Figs 5 & 6, Plate 8)

After the excavation of the footing trenches, ground reduction across the footprint of the new building took place. About 0.4m of made ground was removed but the buried subsoil and natural strata were not reached.

4.3 **Trench C, soakaway, and leaf catchment pit.**

4.3.1 **Trench C** (Fig 5, Plates 10 & 12)

Trench C was a service trench that ran between the soakaway and the new build. It measured *c.*8m in length, 0.45m in width and 1.2m deep. It cut through *c.*0.3m of mixed topsoil and driveway gravel, *c.*0.3m of a mixed light brown-yellow silty clay subsoil and then into the natural strata consisting beige yellow clay, overlying green – grey clay. No archaeological finds or features were observed in trench C.

4.3.2 **Soakaway** (Fig 5, Plate 9)

The soakaway was 1.2m wide, 1.8m in length and 2.2m deep, and was cut through the same deposits as trench C. No significant archaeological finds or features were observed in the trench: the only discovery was a small dump of mid 20th century bricks, observed in the north facing section.

4.3.3 **Leaf catchment pit** (Fig 5, Plate 11)

The catchment pit was 1.2m wide, 0.9m in length and 1.6m deep. This also cut through the same deposits as trench C and the soakaway. No archaeological finds or features were observed in the catchment pit.



Figure 5: Excavated areas (scale 1: 75)

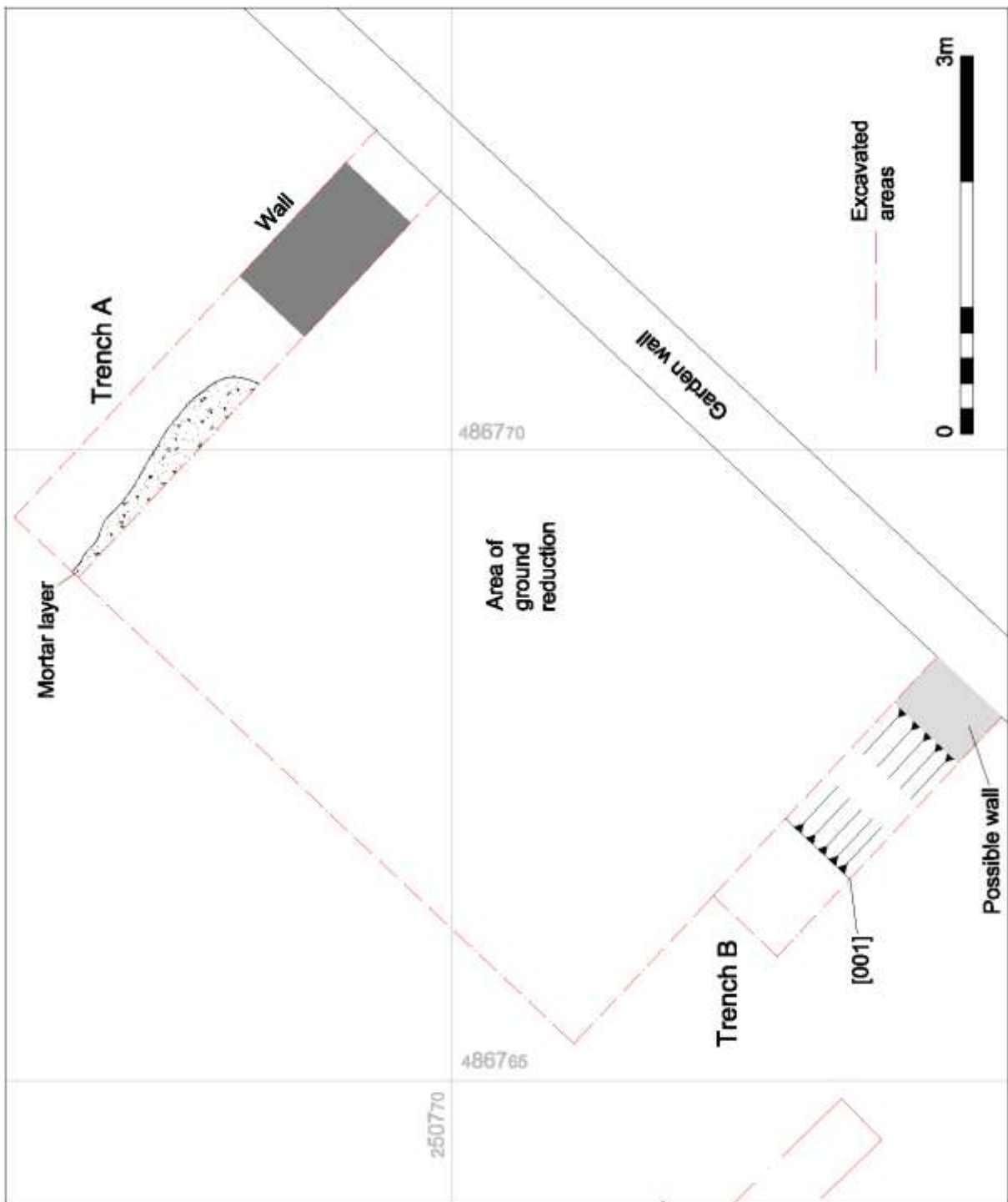


Figure 6: Archaeological remains (scale 1: 50)

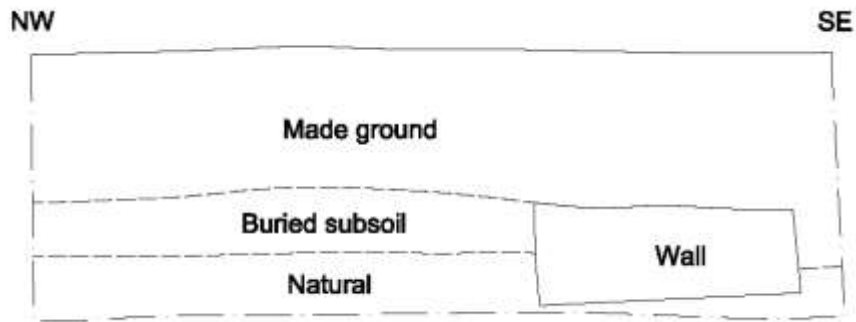


Figure 7: Southwest facing section of trench A (*scale 1: 40*)

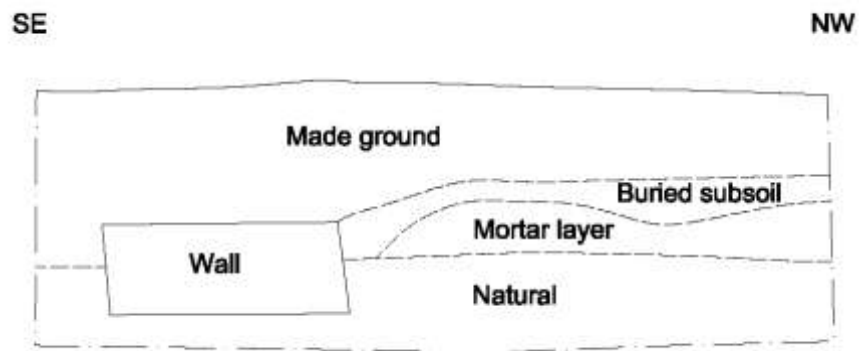


Figure 8: Northeast facing section of trench A (*scale 1: 40*)

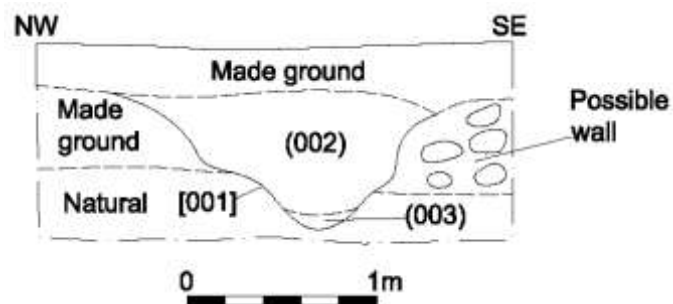


Figure 9: Southwest facing section of trench B (*scale 1: 40*)



Plate 1: Trench A general shot, looking southeast, 2x1m scale



Plate 2: Trench B general shot, looking southeast, 2x1m scale



Plate 3: Wall in trench A, looking southwest, 2x1m scale



Plate 4: Mortar layer in trench A, looking southwest, 2x1m scale



Plate 5: Possible wall in trench B, looking east, 2x1m scale



Plate 6: Possible ditch [001] overlying possible wall in trench B, looking northeast, 2x1m scale



Plate 7: Possible ditch [001] in trench B, looking northeast, 1x1m & 1x2m scale



Plate 8: Overall ground reduction in progress, looking southwest



Plate 9: Soakaway section, looking southeast, 2m scale



Plate 10: Trench C, looking southeast, 2m scale



Plate 11: Catch pit, looking southeast, 2m scale



Plate 12: Trench C, looking north, 2m scale

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The structural remains revealed with the footing trenches may be associated with the original main building of Weston House
- 5.2 The wall revealed in trench A was of a size to suggest it was once the foundations for a much larger structure. Its alignment and position in relation to Weston House could suggest it was once part of the main body of the original house demolished in the mid 18th century (Fig. 4).
- 5.3 The possible robber trench/ditch [001] revealed in trench B lines up with the wall revealed in trench A. The upper fill (002) of [001] suggests deliberate backfill, and with the discovery of 19th century material within the very similar made ground around it, could suggest this occurred at the time when the main body of Weston House was demolished in the early 18th century.
- 5.4 The possible wall revealed in trench B was not bonded by mortar and was more representative of a dump of stones or part of a collapsed wall rather than a wall itself.
- 5.5 The mortar layer revealed in trench A was discovered within close proximity to the wall and could be a demolition layer associated with the removal of the upper courses of the wall itself. Its full dimensions and significance could not be determined due to the constraints of the size of the trench.
- 5.6 Archaeological finds or features were not observed in the footprint ground reduction, as the natural soil horizon was not reached, or in trench C, the soakaway or the leaf catchment pit. It is thought this area is away from the main extent of the original Weston House and has most likely been gardens since the early 16th century. However the existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the areas covered by the watching brief cannot be specifically excluded.
- 5.7 ***Confidence rating***

The conditions for the watching brief were good and the work took place in dry and sunny weather conditions. Full co-operation was received from the contractors and a high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the watching brief.

6. Acknowledgements

The watching brief was commissioned by the architect Roger Carlisle on behalf of his client Dr Nicholas Griffin. The writer is grateful to Roger Carlisle for his assistance. The project was monitored by Nick Crank on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to the builders, Pauley Construction.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann BA MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Martin Cuthbert BA PIFA, Calli Rouse BA PIFA and Carina Summerfield-Hill BA MA. The report was prepared by Martin Cuthbert and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Initial Report
2. Clients site plans
3. Site Monitoring Sheets
4. Site record drawings
5. List of photographs
6. B/W prints & negatives
7. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum (AYBCM: 2009.212).

8. References

Standards & Specifications

- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
- IFA 2000a Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2000b Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*.
- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.

Secondary Sources

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
- Mawer, A & Stenton, F.M. 1925 *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire* (Cambridge)
- Pevsner, N. and Williamson, E. 2000 *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire* (London)
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: WESTON HOUSE		Project No/Code: 1181 1 WWH		Sheet: 5 of 11		
WESTON UNDERWOOD		Date of visit: 17/06/09				
Client/Developer						
Contact: PHIL			Phone: 07834 771045			
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):		Start: 9.30 am		Finish: 11.30 am		
Completed by: CK & CSH						
Development Type:						
Footings	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling	Quarrying	Pipelines	Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Sunny / overcast, dry						
Observations: Observed excavation of new soakaway see sketch sheets for ^{detailed} location & description. No significant earth finds or features observed. Small area of mod (1960's?) bricks noted in section (not a wall). Soakaway located in driveway to NW of new New build, c. 1m from original wall to S, c. 12m from Weston house to W.						
Comments: Service trench & 'catwalk' being excavated tomorrow visit middle of day.						



A.S.C. LTD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD MONITORING RECORD

Project: WESTON HOUSE		Project No/Code: 1181 / LWH	Sheet: 8 of 11
WESTON UNDERWOOD		Date of visit: 18/6/09	
Client/Developer			
Contact:		Phone:	
Duration of Visit (inc. travel):	Start: 11.45	Finish: 1.15	
Completed by:			
Development Type:			
Footings	Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Roads	Levelling
			Quarrying
			Pipelines
			Other (specify):
Site & weather conditions: Overcast, dry			
Observations: Saw 'leaf catch' pit. No arch finds/features observed - see sketch sheets located between soakaway & orig gate way. 1.2m x 0.9 x 1.6m deep. section comprised 0.3 topsoil, 0.3 sub - light brown yellow sandy clay, rare stone + tile, 0.5 water - yellow silty clay, 0.5 water-grey clay			
Comments: Visit on Tues pm to see service run			

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: Weston House, Weston Underwood, Milton Keynes			SITE NO/CODE: 1181/WWH
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	√	√	Wall in trench A, looking southwest, 2x1m scale
2		√	Wall in trench A, looking southwest, 2x1m scale
3	√	√	Trench A general shot, looking southeast, 2x1m scale
4		√	Trench A general shot, looking southeast, 2x1m scale
5	√	√	Mortar layer in trench A, looking southwest, 2x1m scale
6		√	Mortar layer in trench A, looking southwest, 2x1m scale
7	√	√	General strata shot in trench A, looking northeast, 2x1m scale
8		√	General strata shot in trench A, looking northeast, 2x1m scale
9		√	Overall ground reduction in progress, looking southwest
10	√	√	Possible wall in trench B, looking east, 2x1m scale
11		√	Possible wall in trench B, looking east, 2x1m scale
12		√	Possible ditch [001] overlying possible wall in trench B, looking, northeast, 2x1m scale
13		√	Possible ditch [001] in trench B, looking northeast, 1x1m & 1x2m scale
14	√	√	Possible ditch [001] in trench B, looking northeast, 1x1m & 1x2m scale
15		√	Trench B general shot, looking southeast, 2x1m scale
16		√	Trench B general shot, looking southeast, 2x1m scale
17		√	Soakaway section, looking southeast, 2m scale
18		√	Soakaway section, looking southeast, 2m scale
19		√	General shot of house, looking southeast
20		√	General shot of house, looking south
21		√	General shot, looking east
22		√	General shot of house, looking southwest
23		√	General shot looking southwest
24	√	√	Catch pit, looking southeast, 2m scale
25	√	√	Catch pit, looking southeast, 2m scale
26	√	√	Catch pit, looking southeast, 2m scale
27	√	√	Trench C, looking north, 1m scale
28	√	√	Trench C, looking north, 2m scale
29	√	√	Trench C, looking north, 2m scale
30	√	√	Trench C, looking east, 2m scale
31	√	√	Trench C, looking east, 2m scale
32		√	Trench C, looking southeast, 2m scale
33		√	Trench C, looking southeast, 2m scale
34	√	√	Trench C, looking north, 2m scale
35		√	Trench C, looking north, 2m scale
36	√	√	Soakaway section, looking southeast 1m scale
37		√	Soakaway section, looking southeast 1m scale

Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Weston House, Weston Underwood, Milton Keynes		
Short Description:	In June 2009 a watching brief was carried out at Weston House, Weston Underwood, Milton Keynes, during the excavation of footing trenches and associated services, in relation to the conversion and extension of the existing garage and workshop. One wall, a possible wall, a layer of mortar and a possible ditch were revealed in the footings trench.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Watching Brief		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	None
Current land use:	Garage	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	None	Monument period:	none
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	None		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 8672 5078
District:	Milton Keynes	Parish:	Weston Underwood
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Weston House, Weston Underwood, Olney, Bucks, MK46 5LA		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	4300 sq m	Height OD: (metres)	c. 70m
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Nick Crank	Project design originator:	N/a
Project Manager:	Karin Semmelmann	Director/Supervisor:	Martin Cuthbert
Sponsor / funding body:	Dr N Griffin		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	04-06-2009	End date:	25-06-09
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	N/A	None	
Paper:	Buckinghamshire Museum (AYBCM:2009.212)	Site records, report, photographs	
Digital:		CD-ROM with copies of all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Watching Brief: Weston House, Weston Underwood, Milton Keynes		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1181/WWH/1		
Author(s):	Martin Cuthbert BA (Hons) PIFA		
Page nos	28	Date:	06/07/09